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Military Programs Collaborate to Combat Traumatic Brain Injuries

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain. TBIs can result from combat-related activities or training. Head injuries can also be sustained in daily activities like a motorcycle or bicycle accident, a fender-bender, or a tackle during a friendly game of football. It may knock an individual out briefly or for an extended period of time, or make someone feel confused or have an alteration of consciousness. Although the most common type of brain injury is categorized as a mild TBI or concussion, more rare TBI incidents can be considered moderate or severe.

A Head for the Future, the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center's awareness initiative, provides resources to help promote TBI awareness and assist service members in obtaining a better understanding of brain



injury prevention, recognition and recovery. Interestingly, recovery is different for every individual. More than 80 percent of our service members fully recover from a concussion, often within a few days to weeks after the injury. However, in some instances, they experience longer-lasting symptoms, such as lack of concentration, blurred vision and hearing loss.

The U.S. Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) supports individuals who are recovering from TBI by providing assistive technology products used to maintain or improve human functional capabilities. In fact, 95 percent of clinicians



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who work with TBI patients have reported that assistive technology can have a positive impact for those experiencing on-going TBI symptoms.

Former Army 2LT Matthew Staton incurred a mild TBI from multiple blast exposures during a combat tour in Iraq. Matthew has now incorporated the use of CAP-provided assistive technology to perform his essential job functions as a staff assistant to the Secretary of the U.S. Army. CAP provided Matthew with a personal digital assistant and a digital voice recorder to help him with memory loss and a decreased sense of organization and concentration. Speaking about CAP and using assistive technology, Staton described himself as “the Post-It note king without these technologies” and recounted how he “had stuff

written down everywhere... [the technology] makes me feel like I can still be productive.”

MAJ Ivan Castro, who was blinded by a blast in Iraq, fully described how CAP not only helped him, but can help other service members overcome disabling challenges. Whether a soldier is blind, suffers with dexterity issues, has cognitive memory challenges or a traumatic brain injury, CAP has enabling technology to provide service members. This technology can help them operate independently and be productive in an office setting or a highly intense workforce environment.

For additional information please visit, A Head for the Future at <http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/aheadforthefuture>. To learn more about how CAP can help you, please visit www.cap.mil.

CAP's Accommodation Procurement Process

Following fiscal year 2016, in which the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) accommodated a record number of individuals, CAP is continuing to work through a backlog of over 2,000 accommodations, many of which were requested in fiscal year 2016.

As a federal program, CAP adheres to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and as a result, processing timeframes vary based on what items are requested, when they are requested and the acquisition vehicle used to procure them. Since CAP assesses requests on a case-by-case basis, the processing timeframes for accommodations vary greatly.



View our online training about CAP's procurement activity and team at www.cap.mil/NewsEvents/TrainingVideo.aspx?id=17.

For an example, an individual requesting an ergonomic keyboard listed on CAP's blanket purchase agreement (BPA) may receive that item quicker than an individual requesting multiple BPA-listed devices, filled by different vendors.

CAP can also make purchases with government purchase cards (GPCs). When CAP makes a purchase with a GPC, it is required by the FAR to use mandatory sources such as AbilityOne, GSA Advantage or Department of Defense (DoD) EMALL before utilizing an open market source.

Requirement Packages are another procurement vehicle available to CAP. A requirement package is used for products or groups of products that total more than \$3,500. If an accommodation request is a part of a requirement package, they can take upwards of 60 days to receive.

Currently, CAP does not have BPAs in place, and because of this, the only procurement methods we are presently using are GPCs and Requirements Packages. Processing requests with these two options has a tendency to increase the time it takes to order and receive the accommodation.

To learn more about CAP's procurement activity and team, please visit our online training at www.cap.mil/NewsEvents/TrainingVideo.aspx?id=17. To learn more about how CAP can help you, please visit www.cap.mil.

CAP Presidential Trivia:

Which Recent American Presidents Used Hearing Aids?

Do you know which two recent Presidents of the United States used hearing aids?

If you guessed Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, you would be correct. During their tenures in the Oval Office, both Presidents required hearing aids after experiencing difficulties hearing high-pitched noises. According to the New York Times, President Reagan's hearing problems began in the 1930s after a pistol was fired near his ear on a movie set. President Clinton's hearing loss, on the other hand, is both a result from playing in a band and aging. The hearing loss experienced by both Presidents is not uncommon. According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 15 percent of American adults report trouble hearing and 28.8 million American adults "could benefit from using aids."

While CAP does not provide hearing aids, deaf and hard of hearing accommodations provided by CAP can work with various hearing aid models and even assist individuals who may not wear hearing aids. CAP created a video to highlight the various assistive listening devices available to customers which can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpoZBr14P7w.

To learn more about how CAP can help you, please visit www.cap.mil.

Sources

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- www.nytimes.com/1983/09/08/us/reagan-begins-to-wear-a-hearing-aid-in-public.html
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Are You Experiencing Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is defined by the American Tinnitus Association as “the perception of sound when no actual external noise is present.” It is commonly referred to as “ringing in the ears,” and is a condition that millions of Americans experience. The National Institutes of Health estimates that close to 25 million Americans has experienced tinnitus within the past year.

Tinnitus can manifest itself in three ways:

- Tonal tinnitus, or the perception of a near-continuous sound;
- Pulsatile tinnitus, which is the perception of pulsing sounds; and,
- Musical tinnitus, which causes the perception of music or singing.

In 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) described tinnitus as the “number one disability among veterans.” Incidences of tinnitus may occur among veterans more often due to experiences they encounter during their service, including: gunfire, blasts, roar of an aircraft, and the sound of heavy machinery.



All soldiers are required to have hearing exams before deploying. Tinnitus afflicts even more veterans than hearing loss. (U.S. Army photo by Brandil Gill, CRDAMC PAO)

If you are a CAP customer, a federal employee or an active duty Service member experiencing tinnitus, CAP can accommodate you. Common assistive devices that CAP can provide to reduce limitations caused by tinnitus include telephone amplifiers, FM systems, headsets, noise-canceling headphones and memory/cueing aids.

To learn more about how CAP can help you, please visit www.cap.mil.

Sources

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- www.ata.org/understanding-facts#nhnes

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